

VZCZCXYZ0005
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHLG #0606 3161457
ZNY SSSSS ZZH
R 121457Z NOV 09
FM AMEMBASSY LILONGWE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0054
INFO RUEHDR/AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM 6725
RUEHSB/AMEMBASSY HARARE 1512
RUEHLS/AMEMBASSY LUSAKA 4205
RUEHTO/AMEMBASSY MAPUTO 6438
RUEHSA/AMEMBASSY PRETORIA 2784
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC

S E C R E T LILONGWE 000606

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR DRL
DEPARTMENT ALSO FOR PRM, AF/RSA, INL, G/TIP

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/09/2019
TAGS: [ASEC](#) [KTIP](#) [PREL](#) [PREF](#) [PTER](#) [MI](#)
SUBJECT: MALAWI: REFUGEE FLOW SLOWED BY TIGHTER BORDERS

REF: LILONGWE 00426

Classified By: Peter W. Bodde, Chief of Mission, Reason(s) 1.4(b),(c),
and (d).

11. (C) SUMMARY: RSO and Poloff visited Malawi's Dzaleka Refugee Camp on October 27 and learned that the GOM has tightened border controls along Malawi's frontier with Tanzania. UNHCR and NGO staff believe commercial smuggling of Ethiopian and Somali refugees through Malawi has been reduced due to the effort. Malawi authorities successfully deported a group of Somalis they had detained since July. End summary.

Better Border Controls Working

12. (C) RSO and Poloff visited Malawi's Dzaleka Refugee Camp in association with a project funding refugee vocational skills training. UNHCR and Jesuit Refugee Services (JRS) staff said the new GOM Minister of Home Affairs and Internal Security Aaron Sangala had instituted controls along the Tanzanian frontier and that these new controls were proving to be effective. They reported that the flow of refugees into Dzaleka was drastically reduced and that UNHCR had encouraged the Ministry to take steps to ensure that legitimate asylum seekers were not being kept out. Efforts by Mozambique to seal their borders in preparation for recently held elections was also a factor. Mozambique is a preferred next stop on the trek to South Africa, and news that authorities were refusing entry to refugees crossing from Malawi caused groups to consider alternate routes.

Factions Among Those Already Here Cause Problems

13. (U) Dzaleka Camp administrators told emboffs that the majority of the camp's population consists of semi-permanent residents from the Great Lakes Region countries of Rwanda, Burundi, and Congo. The remainder are transient Somalis and Ethiopians who use the camp as a rest stop on their journey to South Africa and beyond. The Somalis and Ethiopians do not integrate well with each other or the larger resident refugee community. Tensions increase when the transients resort to petty crime in and around the camp in an effort to raise funds for their onward journey. A recent flare-up among the different groups prompted the UNHCR to request additional support from the Malawi National Police.

Somali Refugee Group Deported

¶4. (S) On a related issue, UNHCR Representative Abel Mnilinyi confirmed that a group of Somali refugees, detained since July by Malawi authorities, was successfully deported to Tanzania. The GOM had attempted to deport the group to Ethiopia, but they were denied permission to enter that country. Dzaleka Camp staff and some in the Malawi media had speculated that at least one of the detainees was suspected by the GOM to be a supporter of Al Shabab.

¶5. (C) COMMENT: The GOM's progress in controlling its borders is a welcome development. Minister Sangala had stated that refugees and illegal immigration would be his top concerns (reftel). His efforts are having an effect. Post has asked the GOM to identify specific areas where we can assist.
BODDE